

SWCC Monitoring Committee
Meeting Notes
October 19, 2011

Present: Keith Stockmann*, Cory Davis*, Travis Belote*, Jon Haufler*, Shane Hendrickson*, Adam Switalski*, Renate Bush*, Andrew Larson*, Megan Birzell*, John Ingebretson*, Joe Kerkvliet*, Gunnar Carnwath*, Scott Tomson*

Action Items:

- **Cory** will draft a template and send it out to all subcommittees.
- **Cory** will work with Travis and Keith to edit TOC based on comments and send to subcommittee leads.
- **Subcommittees** need to fill in their sections of Plan. At next meeting, two subcommittees (socioeconomic and aquatics) will present their draft sections. The other subgroups will have more polished results by Dec. meeting.

I. Welcome/Introductions/Updates

- a. Notes from the Sept 1 meeting were unanimously approved.
- b. Update on Auggie and GRAIP monitoring
 - i. Auggie pre-treatment vegetation monitoring plots are focusing on the area that is close to meeting R1 old-growth criteria. Harvest could potentially start this winter depending on when the contract is re-bid this fall. Monitoring will be done with FY 2011 carryover money.
 - ii. GRAIP: We were originally hoping to do a partnership agreement with RMRS in Boise but partnership agreements cannot be between two branches of the same agency. So those funds went toward two bridge relocation projects (specifically the design component) in Monture and Dunham creeks. This also freed up some monitoring funds to go to Auggie.
 - iii. Auggie project will include replacing a culvert with a bridge. There will be site-specific monitoring of this. It's been awarded and will be implemented next summer.
- c. Google Site for Committee
 - i. Cory sent out a link to the site.
 - ii. The goals of the site are to reduce email traffic, make sure everyone is up to date on meetings, and to access documents for review.
 - iii. It has a calendar that is updated regularly and anyone on the Monitoring Committee can add to it.
 - iv. Please provide feedback to Cory on its usefulness.
- d. Lisa Blackburn has been confirmed as the Forest Service GIS contact for SWCC. All requests should go through Cory.

- i. Currently getting shapefiles for all SWCC projects. Next priority is updating the SWCC boundary layer.
 - e. Approval of amendments to the SWCC Monitoring Committee Charter
 - i. The charter was amended further from the draft changes sent out previously, to reflect that a membership letter will be submitted to the chairs and that it will express commitment to abide by the terms of the charter.
 - ii. The charter was then approved unanimously.
 - f. FY 2011 project timelines
 - i. Several subcommittees have identified the need to develop a timeline for each FY 2011 monitoring project. It should include a detailed data management timeline as well.
 - ii. ACTION ITEM: Cory will draft a timeline template and send it out to all project leads.
 - iii. The template will include an updated list of the FS contact people for each resource. John Ingebretson is the lead for fuels on Swan and Jarel Kurtz for Seeley and Lincoln districts.
 - iv. Need one person from each specialty to help with the design of the protocols, but will really need someone from each district to help with implementation because they're the ones familiar with the projects. So two levels of involvement.
 - g. Fuels and vegetation groups are combined and had a joint meeting prior to this meeting.
- II. Follow-up on Prioritization workshop
- a. Recording of workshop and presentations will be available on Google site.
 - b. Results from prioritization exercise (at what level should different topics/efforts be addressed: Project Level, SWCC Prioritization Committee, or Out of SWCC Purview) were tallied and shown on screen. Some of the projects that ranked particularly high included: Minimum Roads Analysis, IRPS, Climate Models, Fire Behavior Models, and RCAT. These results have been shared with the Prioritization Committee.
- III. How can monitoring inform project design (at both project and landscape level)?
- a. Previous decisions:
 - i. Monitor replicated treatments and controls across landscape.
 - ii. Not all projects will be monitored.
 - b. The question was asked if we really need controls in fuels treatments given the time frame we're looking at?
 - c. Travis' Presentation:
 - i. Experimental design: replicated treatments, untreated controls, pre-treatment data, randomization
 - 1. Why an experimental design?

- a. Confidence in monitoring results: replication and randomization provide confidence and fair comparisons
 - b. Randomization provides greater inference to response you're measuring
 - c. Adaptive management learning
 - d. Controls provide "insurance policy": untreated controls to compare impacts of treatments to changes that occur through time with or without treatments
 - e. Tests alternatives in same design
 - f. Portfolio of approaches represented on landscape
 - g. Pretreatment data to ensure treatment impacts were caused by treatments and not due to a preexisting condition
 - h. Unique approach to forest management and could serve as national example
- ii. Renate: FS treats so few acres already that are controls really necessary? We can have "controls" in similar sites that aren't even on the table for treatment and use them as controls.
 - iii. Dalton Mountain (currently in scoping) project in Lincoln as case study: control, aggregated retention harvest, and leave tree regeneration treatments applied randomly to polygons on the landscape; completely randomized design, which is most robust statistically.
 - iv. Jon: Feasibility limits treatment opportunities anyway, and controls limit it even more.
 - v. Andrew: pre-commercial thinning and prescribed fire units are still going to receive those treatments. Partly undertaken in response to concern over doing regen in lodgepole and calling it restoration.
 - vi. Renate: push for randomization across sites, not within.
 - vii. Keith: idea to leave "controls" for X years and have them be treated X years out if results of initial entry are what we expect. Adaptive management in planning. Also, controls may not remain controls due to confounding factors (i.e. direct fire attack). So we may lose them anyway and not be able to use them, this is a tradeoff.
 - viii. Travis: Could have multi-scaled design by 6th code HUC. Treated and untreated watersheds. Could be appropriate for aquatics monitoring. Within a treated watershed you could have controls. Could detect both treatment and landscape effects.
 - ix. Travis: Treatments and sampling could be stratified by ecological sites.

- x. Keith: timing is biggest element monitoring committee can influence/contribute to.
- xi. Sandy: likes Keith's idea of adaptive management in planning. But how will we know what success is?
 - 1. Jon: specific quantifiable objectives will help with this.
 - 2. Implementation versus effectiveness monitoring.
 - 3. Different levels of success. Competing demands on a stand (i.e. fuels, wildlife, fisheries have different goals)
- xii. Take home: monitoring as part of project design: earlier involvement is better; elements of robust experimental design possible even in NEPA-started projects; anticipate monitoring: design projects large enough to accommodate controls while meeting target acres treated.
- xiii. Andrew: monitoring needs to be keyed to treatments that actually happen, whether or not they fit with the prioritization work.
- xiv. Travis: setting up projects with experimental design can attract science and scientists to bring their own money to bear to help with monitoring.
- d. Jon: we need to make sure we don't confuse objectives. Fuels and forest restoration aren't necessarily the same objective.
 - i. Potential stratifications: fire regimes, ecological sites, treatments (mechanical thinning, hand thinning etc.), # of replicates you want, # of stands, etc.
 - ii. As prioritization better defines what it's trying to accomplish, Monitoring Committee will need to pick what to monitor out of that (i.e. 2 or 3 ecological sites, focus on large trees only, etc.)
 - iii. Renate: should we stratify based on the things FS most often gets appealed and litigated on so we can bolster science to counteract future lawsuits?
 - 1. Should be a consideration, but not the only one.
- e. Question about consistency of treatments across units and how that impacts monitoring.
- f. Forest Plans dictate a lot, and we need to understand the limitations and guidelines inherent in them.

IV. Long-term Monitoring Plan:

- a. Review TOC and discuss how subcommittees can fill in their sections
 - i. Deciding which projects to monitor will need to be reviewed every year or so to stay up to date.
 - ii. In Monitoring Plan, should identify criteria for deciding whether to monitor a project or not.
 - iii. The What, How, and Who potentially could do the work need to be addressed in plan but not specifics on Where.

- iv. Jim's monitoring narrative will be starting point for introduction section.
- v. Need discussion of how monitoring will inform adaptive management. Initially in "triggers" subsection but thinking about moving up to introduction.
- vi. Anything to add to intro section:
 - 1. Shane: Need to talk about where we've come from, what we're doing now, and how we'll adapt in the future.
- vii. TOC currently organized around CFLR and SWCC proposal objectives.
 - 1. Adam: Suggest additional objective addressing roads in the context of impact on wildlife (access, habitat security, food, hiding cover perspective)
 - 2. Suggestion: B(5) Reclaim roads to restore wildlife habitat security and habitat quality
 - 3. Shane: Maybe give roads issue their own "letter" in TOC with objectives underneath it, understanding that they'll cross over a lot into other objectives.
 - 4. Keith: need to keep in mind that this wasn't elevated in the SWCC proposal and was seen more as a treatment tool to achieve objectives rather than a specific objective in its own right.
 - 5. Maybe include "large tree" objective within low- and mixed-severity objectives above instead of having a stand-alone objective.
 - 6. Sandy: RO says soils should be lumped in with veg monitoring, not just aquatics monitoring.
 - 7. Joe: under socioeconomic objectives, broaden e1 to include attitudes toward aquatics and roads treatments.
 - 8. ACTION ITEM: Cory will work with Travis and Keith to edit TOC based on comments and send to subcommittee leads.
- viii. Within each objective there's a standard set of things to describe. Thoughts:
 - 1. Separate out methods for data collection and methods for data analysis.
 - 2. "Who will do the monitoring" is unclear. Needs clarification.
- ix. ACTION ITEM: Sections need to be filled in by subcommittees. Timeline says this work will start between now and next meeting. At next meeting, subcommittees should report on progress to date. 20 minutes for each subcommittee. Then flesh each section out more between Nov. and Dec. meetings.
- x. Build in time for broader review when draft of each section is done.

xi. Meet on Nov 9th to review what's available thus far. Two subcommittees (socioeconomic and aquatics) will present their draft sections. The other subgroups will have more polished results by Dec. meeting.

V. Next meeting will be November 9th at the Seeley Lake Ranger District.